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Source: *The Journal of Race Development*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Jan., 1913), pp. 286-301

Published by:

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/29737962>

Accessed: 17/07/2014 19:32

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A PLEA FOR FAIR PLAY AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE CHINESE REPUBLIC

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The problem of the Orient is the problem of the twentieth century, and today, China is its key. The most eventful year of modern times in the life of the Chinese people has just passed into history. They have escaped from the despotism of a corrupt monarchy to the freedom of a republic. The problems which now confront them are the recognition of their government as a republic by foreign nations, and the adjustment of their finances. Unless these are arranged to the satisfaction of a powerful syndicate of bankers, backed by the diplomats of their various countries, it has been intimated that the partitioning of the country may be apprehended as a probable eventuality.

It might have been hoped that the carnival of territorial lust, which for centuries caused untold bloodshed the world over, had culminated in the partitioning of Africa—the last of the continents to be parceled off by the world's looters, who in the division of the spoils, followed, as the robber barons of feudal times,

The good old rule, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

But look at China today—that grand old country, with its great wall which for over twenty centuries protected it from the hordes of Tartars and Mongols on the north, while its Thibetan ranges on the west, and impenetrable forests on the south, permitted it to live in peace and tranquillity thousands of years, with no fear of molestation by “foreign devils,” from land or sea. And in this time the beautiful but fallacious philosophy of Confucius, which taught the

rule of moral suasion rather than that by might, grew until its essence was expressed in the proverb, "Better have no child than one who is a soldier"—this, too, in a land where it is considered a disgrace to die childless.

And what was the natural result: A condition of insecurity, of defencelessness, of inability to enforce that first law of nature—self-protection—followed, which, when realized by the Occidental nations, resulted in their seizing great sections of her domains upon trivial excuses, and wringing most valuable concessions from her rulers.

As a direct result of this spoliation, the worm at last turned, and the Boxer uprising of 1900 followed, having for its declared purpose the forcible expulsion of all foreigners from the country, and the recovery by China of her despoiled possessions. I say, without fear of contradiction by those who are familiar with that issue (and I was there), that that uprising was one of the most splendid exhibitions of patriotism witnessed in modern times. The methods pursued by the Chinese, due to the ignorance of their misguided leaders, and the horrors that followed, have afforded the theme for many a tragic tale and numberless explanatory theories. But the plain fact cannot be gainsaid, nor too strongly emphasized, that the essential motive of that propaganda was the freeing of the land from the hated foreigners, who, in current phrase, had "robbed the people of their country."

It was then, that in reprisal and revenge, the so-called civilized world turned against them. The eight allied armies of the "great powers" marched to their capital, slaughtered their people, raped their women, looted their temples, their treasure and their habitations, committed brutalities that would have made Nero envious, and created a sentiment in China which fairly crucified Christianity, and which should redound to the shame and humiliation of the Christian nations whose forces participated in the outrages; but which, instead, secured monstrous indemnities and subjected China to the most humiliating terms of peace that were ever inflicted upon a nation, and that have kept her poverty-stricken ever since. America, however, has reason for pride in that she waived claims to over half the indemnity, whilst

her great statesman, John Hay, succeeded temporarily in preserving the integrity of the country by his splendid policy of the "open door."

Never shall I forget that winter at Ching Wan Tao, following the war, where detachments of the allied army were gathered awaiting the fate of China. They reminded me of a pack of hungry wolves around the carcass of a dead animal—each fearing to set his fangs in the carcass, lest while so engaged his neighbor might do the same with him. And so during the long negotiations that finally led to the declaration of peace, the situation continued.

Four years later I again visited that scene, and there, in smaller numbers, were found the troops of many of the nations still waiting, ready to seize the first opportunity to partition the country and to secure their share of the spoil. But more pressing engagements were then imminent, involving the attention of some of the powers. The Russo-Japanese struggle was on, and China was given a temporary respite. From that time until the outbreak of the revolution which led to the establishment of the Republic, China paid the indemnity claims with such regularity that no opportunity was found for interference.

For more than three-quarters of a century, beginning with the unrighteous Opium War of England, down to the equally unrighteous Boxer War of 1900, and even later, China has been subjected to a series of squeezes and despoilment of her territory to an extent unequaled in history. The iniquitous indemnities wrung from her as the result of the Boxer campaign would have been reversed, and the countries now receiving them would be paying for the outrages committed, had right, instead of might, prevailed. The powerful governments and financial institutions doing business in the Orient have become obsessed with the idea that it is legitimate business to "squeeze" the country, regardless of right or justice, and in the present instance they are continuing that policy. The six-power group of bankers, backed by the diplomacy of the countries they represent, before advocating the joint recognition of the Republic, demand first, an excessive rate of interest for money advanced, and second, terms,

as to its distribution and expenditure, so humiliating that no proud nation could grant them without loss of self-respect. If these conditions are not complied with, the hidden threat is intimated that the intervention of foreign powers and dismemberment of the country may ensue.

The effect upon China of the spoliation of her territory and finances created among the leading minds of her people an appreciation of her weakness, and of the necessity for the adoption of Occidental methods for self-protection. They saw the absolute imbecility of continuing the policy of the Manchu dynasty, and the necessity for a change of government. The efforts of her scholars and statesmen were for a long time foiled by the opposition of the Empress Dowager, who never hesitated to decapitate those who presented too radical programmes for reform. But despite all opposition, the new spirit grew and spread all over the country, propagated by Dr. Sun Yat Sen and other reformers, until the revolution followed, and the Republic became a reality.

The Chinese Republic deserves formal recognition because of the character of the revolution which made it possible. It obtained the maximum of liberty with the minimum of blood-shed. It was an evolution rather than a revolution, the most potent factors of which were those of peace, and not of war. They were the results of trade with foreign nations, the importation of modern inventions, railroads, telegraphs, newspapers; the work of Christian missionaries, schools and colleges established by them; but, most of all, the influence of Chinese students who had been educated in foreign universities, and who carried back to their native land the high ideals of Occidental government. In comparison with the epoch-making wars for freedom in Occidental lands—the French Revolution, England's fight for Magna Charta, or our own great seven years' struggle for Independence—the Chinese Revolution was almost bloodless. It is stated that the total mortality of the war which secured the emancipation of 400,000,000 of people, was less than the number lost in the battle of the Wilderness, or in single conflicts in the war now raging in the Balkans.

The moderation shown by the successful leaders to their

late rulers was another striking characteristic. Instead of the guillotine or exile, they were retired with liberal pensions, and allowed to retain their empty titles. The leaders enjoined upon their followers the protection of life and property, both commercial and missionary, and these orders were strictly obeyed.

A people who carried to a successful termination such a revolution, deserve the respect and recognition of the world. There are many qualities inherent in the Chinese nature which entitle the present government to immediate recognition. The enemies of China today forget the traditions of the race—that China was old when Chaldea and Babylon were young, that she saw the rise and fall of Grecian and Roman civilization, and that she has maintained the integrity of her government and territory ever since; that her scholars discovered the compass and invented the intellectual game of chess, when our ancestors in Europe were groveling in the darkness of mediaevalism; that she produced her own science, literature, art, philosophy and religion, whose founder, Confucius, five hundred years before the birth of Christ, expounded the doctrine of Christianity in the saying: “Do not do unto others what you would not have others do unto you.” They forget that for nearly a thousand years China has been nearer a democracy in many features of its government than any other government then in existence. The fundamental unit of democracy, the foundation upon which our own government rests, is embodied in the principle of the New England town meeting. All authorities on democracy, De Tocqueville, Bryce and the *Compte de Paris*, agree in this.

In China, local government is, in practically all its features, and for centuries has been, controlled by local authorities. The officials of the central government never interfere with the local administration, except for the collection of revenues allocated to imperial requirements. It is the opinion of many authorities that the government of China has given more happiness and more individual liberty to a greater mass of humanity than any other government in the world.

The Chinese have never sought territorial aggrandizement, but have loved the paths of peace where the law of moral suasion, and not of might, ruled. They possess qualities of industry, economy, temperance and tranquillity, unsurpassed by any nation on earth. With these qualities they are in the great race of the survival of the fittest to *stay*. They are to be feared by foreign nations more for their virtues than for their vices; and in their present struggle for the maintenance of liberty, they deserve our earnest sympathy and assistance in the solution of problems, seemingly so different, but inherently so similar to our own.

The noble qualities of the race are illustrated in the leaders of the present movement. President Yuan Shih Kai is a masterful statesman who inspires confidence in all who know him. Few other men in history have had such kaleidoscopic changes of fortune, and few men have met them with greater courage or possessed the transcendent abilities that lift one so high above the common level. The resignation of the provisional presidency of the Republic by Dr. Sun Yat Sen was "an act worthy of the finest traditions of patriotism in any land." The National Assembly in accepting it, said: "His act has afforded the world an example of purity of purpose and self-sacrifice unparalleled in history."

The Republic is an established institution of over a year's standing. An able statesman has been duly elected as president and the other machinery of its government is in operation. It has undertaken to observe all treaties, and to discharge all the international obligations of its predecessor. No one will deny that there are serious military, financial and political problems still to be solved, but they are matters of purely domestic concern. They do not alter the fact, which is involved in recognition by other nations, that China has changed her form of government, and that her representative and duly accredited agent before the world is no longer an emperor, but a president. In the analogous case of the recognition of Brazil in 1890, Senator Turpie said: "The success of a revolutionary movement is in itself a statement to the world that a majority of a nation has chosen a change of government; the following existence of

the revolutionary government, and under its authority, will come the question of the constitution, laws, statutes and ordinances of the new government, but these questions are wholly internal ones."

Many authorities on international law support the legal status of the present government. Hall says: "So long as a person or a body of persons are indisputably in possession of the required powers, foreign states treat with them as the organ of the state; but so soon as they cease to be the actual organ, foreign states cease dealing with them; and it is usual, if the change is unquestionably final, to open relations with their successors, independently of whether it has been effected constitutionally." Wheaton defines a *de facto* government as "One which is really in possession of the powers of sovereignty, although the possession may be wrongful or precarious." Phillimore states, "That the recognition of a new government should be preceded by an absolute *bona fide* possession of independence as a separate kingdom, not the enjoyment of perfect and undisturbed internal tranquillity (a test too severe for many of the oldest kingdoms), but there should be the existence of a government—acknowledged by the people over whom it is set, and ready to acknowledge and competent to discharge international obligations." The present conditions in China satisfy these definitions of a *de facto* government.

But the Republic of China is not only the *de facto* government, it is also the *de jure* government. As stated by Dr. Chao-Chu Wu, son of ex-Minister Wu Ting Fang, "the Manchukuo rulers were not illegally driven from the throne, but they abdicated of themselves, and with their last act legalized the Republic. The abdication edict transfers the sovereignty hitherto vested in the emperor alone, to the people; it legalizes the Republic, and, what is more to the purpose, it constitutes a recognition of the new government by the sovereign power." Hall says: "Recognition by a parent state, by implying an abandonment of all pretensions over the insurgent community, is more conclusive evidence of independence than recognition by a third power, and it removes all doubt from the minds of other governments as to the

propriety of recognition by themselves." When the fallen government of China has itself recognized the new government, what reason is there for other governments to delay?

For the reasons enumerated—the status of the present government of China, the virtues of the Chinese race, the character of the Revolution in which these virtues have found their expression in bringing about the change of government, for all these reasons, the Republic of China is deserving of immediate recognition by the nations of the world. But there are special reasons why recognition should be accorded by our government first of all.

Special obligations are laid upon us of the United States by our position in the eyes of the world as the most powerful republic in existence, and one of the oldest. The President of the United States is rightly regarded as "the champion and exponent of that form of government consecrated by the blood of our Revolutionary fathers." Our own republican principles justify China in looking to us for sympathy and support in this hour of crisis and of need.

Such an expectation is warranted by our dealings with other nations. Numerous precedents might be cited to show that it has always been the policy of the United States government to recognize the existence of a government which was capable of maintaining itself. Our relations with France illustrate this. On November 7, 1792, in reply to a letter from Gouverneur Morris, then American Minister to Paris, describing the bloody revolution which had just been effected in that capital, Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State, wrote as follows: "It accords with our principles to acknowledge any government to be rightful which is formed by the will of the nation substantially declared." Later he added: "We surely cannot deny to any nation that right whereon our own government is founded—that every one may govern itself according to whatever form it pleases, and change these forms at its own will; and that it may transact its business with foreign nations through whatever organ it thinks proper, whether king, convention, assembly, committee, president, or anything else it may choose. The will of the nation is the only thing essential to be regarded."

The establishment of the Second Republic occurred on the 24th of February, 1848, and less than a week after our Minister to France, Mr. Rush, presented the formal congratulations of our government. Mr. Buchanan, in transmitting to Mr. Rush a letter of credence to the French Republic, said: "In its intercourse with foreign nations, the government of the United States has, from its origin, always recognized the *de facto* governments. We recognize the right of all nations to create and reform their political institutions according to their own will and pleasure. We do not go behind the existing government to involve ourselves in the question of its legitimacy. It is sufficient for us to know that a government exists capable of maintaining itself; and then its recognition on our part inevitably follows." Even as late as September 8, 1900, Mr. Hill, acting Secretary of State, sent to Mr. Hart, United States Minister at Bogota, the following instructions: "The policy of the United States, announced and practiced upon occasion for more than a century, has been and is to refrain from acting upon conflicting claims to the *de jure* control of the executive power of a foreign state; but to base the recognition of a foreign government solely upon its *de facto* ability to hold the reins of administrative power." In withholding recognition from the Republic of China, the present administration is departing from the policy of the great founders of our nation.

There are questions in expediency and advantage as well as of principle in this matter of recognition. We may well consider what some of these results would be. First, China would be encouraged and strengthened in her efforts for reform and education. Evidences of the educational awakening are coming from every part of the land. The Canton Christian college may be taken as typical. The number of students in that institution has increased from 256 to 418 in one term, and the Chinese residents there have recently given over \$80,000 (equivalent to many times that in purchasing power here) for new buildings and equipment of the college. The new Commissioner of Education in Kwang-Tung Province has secured the appropriation of

\$100,000 gold for the education abroad of the students of the province.

A second result of recognition would be the stimulation of trade between China and the nations of the West. When the international relations of China are restored to normal condition, trade, which has already regained most of the ground lost during the disturbances, will assuredly rapidly increase. By recognizing the Republic the powers will, without distinction, confer a boon on the business communities of their respective nations. Missionaries and other representatives of western nations in China, also, would be benefited by the recognition of the Republic. Though the Revolution has been guarded from assuming any anti-foreign or anti-missionary character, until perfect order is established there must be risk for foreigners traveling in the interior. Dr. Wu states: "It is within the power of the foreign countries to reinforce the hand of the government, to extend to it moral support, and give it added prestige to hasten the complete restoration of order, and to insure the safety of their citizens and subjects throughout the vast Republic."

The greatest advantage to be gained by the speedy recognition by all nations would be the prevention of intervention on the part of some which are only waiting an opportunity to appropriate Chinese territory, just as they did with the continent of Africa some thirty years ago. The partitioning of China would be a crime even greater than the partitioning of Poland, and one fraught with far more serious consequences to the human race as a whole.

The Chinese Revolution was not a *coup d'état*, without likelihood of permanence; the old monarchy is hopelessly dead. The Revolution was complete, and peace reigns throughout the land. The new government is without opposition. It is confronted with many difficulties, but they do not spring from the attachment of people to the departed monarchy. As stated by Dr. Morrison in the *London Times*, when referring to the danger of China's splitting up, "Where is the line of cleavage? Both parties

in China are equally republican. Those who allege that President Yuan is assuming a dictatorship are ignoring the facts of his career." And to the critics who charge that the President's Council is composed of hostile factions, whose quarrels threaten the continuance of the Republic, he says: "Nothing could be more misleading. These parties differ in their programmes as political parties do in all countries, but all are equally republican." To those who think it is a reproach and a danger that the new men active in the government are inexperienced, he replies, that the difference can be shown by comparing them with the "corrupt princes and degraded eunuchs who were in power under the Manchu dynasty."

Given recognition by foreign governments, freedom from overt acts of predatory powers, and the right to increase her own customs, now limited to 5 per cent—a right wrung from her by foreigners to secure their unholy indemnities—China will pay all her obligations, no matter how unrighteous. The ruling characteristic of the Chinaman is honesty. He never repudiates his financial obligations.

I hold in my hand a Chinese bank note for a thousand cash issued by the great Ming Emperor Hung Wu, in the year 1367. It is the most ancient piece of financial paper in existence, excepting some duplicates, one of which I presented to the British Museum several years ago. It is three hundred years older than a somewhat similar looking note for which the British Museum paid Pope Hennessy 500 pounds, and which, until this was discovered, was supposed to be the oldest in the world. The lower panel contains the following, as translated by Professor H. B. Morse, Commissioner of Customs and Inspectorate General of Customs of China: "The Imperial Board of Revenue, having memorialized the Throne, has received the Imperial sanction for the issue of Government notes of the Ming Empire, to circulate on the same footing as standard cash. To counterfeit is death. The informant will receive 250 taels of silver, and in addition, the entire property of the criminal.—Signed, Hung Wu." A seal in vermilion bears in character the legend: "Seal for circulating Government

Notes." It is shown as an authentic proof of the antiquity of the Chinaman's knowledge of matters financial, at a time when the ancestors of the six powers syndicate were groping in the darkness of feudalism—matters in which the Chinaman has always borne the unique distinction of being the soul of honor.

The integrity of the Chinese as a people is proverbial. Their former despotic government, despite its innate corruption, never failed to observe its financial obligations to its former creditors, however unjustly incurred. The government of the Republic has solemnly undertaken to faithfully execute all the obligations to the foreign powers, under existing treaties, notwithstanding the onerous burden entailed upon the people, and which, considering their enforced origin, might with some reason have justified repudiation. Apart from the credit for past performances, faithfully observed, and the normal revenues from trade, commerce and the usual taxes, the natural resources of the land are incalculable. Of their development, a beginning, by modern methods, has only yet been made; but where it has been, every encouragement exists for extensive exploitation to the great advantage of the people, as well as of capital involved in such industrial enterprises. The extension of railways also affords scope for large investments, which are attracting attention in all quarters, to provide means of internal commerce, now carried on by most primitive methods. These and other considerations justify recourse to the bankers of the world for assistance on equitable conditions toward their development.

With such a reputation for honor, and such tempting opportunities for the successful employment of capital in her domain, why should China be forced to accept humiliating and ignominious terms to obtain credit—terms never before demanded of any other nation? Consider Japan—that other great star of the Orient—whose natural resources are incomparably less than those of China. When her very existence as a nation was at stake in a war with one of the most powerful countries of Europe, it was my privilege as well as pleasure to appear with Count Kaneko before a syndicate of

bankers who were considering the advisability and risk of underwriting her loan—and to urge its acceptance. I had seen the Japanese army in action and believed in its final triumph, and that her people would ultimately pay her obligations. But were any such monstrous conditions demanded from her by the underwriters as are now sought by the sextuple syndicate in dealing with China? On the contrary, Japan secured the money necessary to carry on her campaign on easy terms, although her success in the titanic struggle in which she was then engaged was, at that time, by no means a certainty.

In the case of China, peace reigns, and yet, before the great financiers consent to the issuance of a loan, it is asserted that they demand the right of a close supervision of its expenditure, that it be ear-marked for purposes acceptable to them, that it shall not be available for military or naval defence, so essential for the future protection of the country; that no other loans or obligations shall be made by China without the consent of the syndicate, and that certain revenues be allotted for its security. These terms the statesmen of China refused and they have had the temerity to negotiate an independent loan for \$50,000,000 in opposition to the will of the six-power syndicate.

On the question of China's finances, the London *Times* said, after the floating of the first instalment of the \$50,000,000 loan, which was half of the sum, that it "rejoices that the British people have manifested a different spirit from that of their government." It condemns the government for backing up the monopoly; it declares that the six-power group had "sought to set up a monopoly in China under the aegis of international diplomacy." It also declares that the liabilities of the country to June next, including indemnity arrears, will amount to 10,000,000 sterling and that "much is dependent upon the generosity of the foreign governments and the banking interests."

According to Dr. Morrison, the political adviser of the Chinese government, China has entered upon a new era of prosperity, and by the skill and judgment of her financiers has shaken herself free from international complications.

The London *Morning Post* (Conservative) remarks gloomily: "The prospectus of the new Chinese loan has been duly issued. . . . The British government has been roundly accused of lending itself to a plot for placing China at the mercy of a syndicate of greedy financiers, and for establishing a degrading system of foreign control over her internal affairs. The breaking off of the negotiations between the Chinese government and the six-power banking group and the conclusion of the loan agreement with the London financiers have been hailed as a destruction of the selfish monopoly which was strangling the freedom of the young Republic." The London *Daily News* continues, "It is a battle of giants, for behind the six powers there is a greedy banking monopoly which has hitherto been unchallenged, and behind this monopoly there is a complicated network of international intrigue, partly German, partly American, partly Russian and partly Japanese," and I think we may add, *largely English*.

On October 30, 1912, one of the interested powers, Russia, proposed that a joint and pre-emptory demand be made upon China for the immediate payment of arrears in the Boxer indemnity, the sum amounting to \$50,000,000. It was privately intimated, and not officially denied, that this movement, made on October 30, was intended as an emphatic rebuke to the Chinese for their temerity in contracting loans with independent bankers; disregarding the warning of the powers, and their rejection of the proposed loan by the six-power syndicate. It is stated on high authority that the powers of Europe look favorably upon this proposal. In taking the initiative in the movement to compel China to accept the proposal of the six-power syndicate, and the refusal on China's part to accept the terms, Russia, as stated in reports received on November 7, has been led to negotiate with one of China's provinces, Mongolia, a treaty, signed on November 3, by which she agrees to aid Mongolia to maintain the autonomous government which she has established, and to support her right to maintain a national army, and to exclude both the presence of Chinese troops and the colonization of her territory by the Chinese.

In this act Russia is following the lead of her ally, Great Britain, who not long ago proclaimed what amounts to a protectorate over the territory of Thibet, just as, on a recent occasion, Great Britain joined Russia in their monstrous and disgraceful treatment of Persia. It is the consummation of the policy of "squeeze" that has been carried on ever since China opened her doors, at the mouth of the cannon, to the crime of the century, the opium trade of England, and later, to so-called modern civilization.

Thus it seems that the vivisection of the sick man of the Far East may proceed merrily, without consideration for the interests or sentiments of the patient under the scalpel. This at the moment seems to be the lamentable result of the action of the six-power syndicate. It seems apparent that the famous combination has signally failed in its financial policy, despite governmental assistance, and that nothing has been gained by the delay in the recognition of the Republic. *But what has been lost?*

By formally recognizing the new government as soon as it had demonstrated its right to such recognition, America would have followed the splendid traditions of our forebears, who enunciated and practiced the laws of justice and liberty which made our country great, and from whose teachings we have departed too far. We would have had the proud distinction of being the first to welcome the Republic in its hour of trial. We would have secured the eternal friendship and respect of a nation, which, no matter what adversity it may yet have to face, is destined to be one of the greatest and grandest on earth. We would have immeasurably increased our prestige in the Orient, and possibly, by proclaiming the policy of "hands off" and the "open door" in China, averted the tragedy that now seems almost inevitable.

Is there anyone present who believes that if John Hay had been in the Department of State during the past year, the republic of China would not have been recognized long ago? Had his policy been followed directly after the abdication of the Manchu dynasty, China, in the opinion of well-informed authorities, would have escaped many of the dangers now menacing her. Time was, in the history of American diplo-

macy, when our Executive acted upon the recognition of downtrodden nations which had emancipated themselves from tyranny and established Republican forms of government, without consultation or dictation from Lombard or Wall Street. The majority of our people are, and from the first have been, in sincere sympathy with China in her struggle for liberty. Is their will to be carried out or is liberty, and opportunity, to be throttled and made subservient to a group of capitalists who seek to monopolize the privilege of dictatorship?

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.